(c) Coaches in the world are manufactured with fire retardant materials which will delay the propagation of fire. Our coaches are also manufactured using non-inflammable material with fire retradant properties in accordance with international practice, thus minimizing the impact of any fire generated in the coaches to the maximum extent.

Inadequate safety

†3286. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government allocate hundred crores of rupees every year for safety and relief work of Railways;

(b) if so, the reasons of inadequate Railways safety inspite of this allocation;

(c) reasons for taking many days and even months together to save stranded passengers/ to take out dead bodies from railway coaches after rail accident; and

(d) details of the steps taken by Government for bringing immediate improvement in all the above matters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) Yes, Sir. Ample allocation is made every year for safety and relief work.

(b) The incidence of accidents per million train kilometres has come down from 0.65 during the year 2000-01 to 0.44 during 2002-03. The number of consequential train accidents have shown a decline of more than 25% during the year 2002-03 as compared to 2000-01.

(c) Indian Railways accord highest priority to saving stranded passengers and taking out dead bodies from railway coaches after rail accidents. The work at the site of accidents goes on non stop and officers and staff do not leave the site till:

(i) All the injured are attended to;

(ii) All dead bodies are handed over to Police; and

(iii) Traffic is restored.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

In railway accidents, there are limitations in relief and rescue effort as at best only two cranes can be used at a time (one from each end). The actual time taken depends upon several factors such as severity of accidents, extent of jumbling of coaches, location and terrain involving bridges, formation, embankment etc., soil and lading, weather conditions, accessibility by cranes etc.

(d) In order to further improve the response time, Ministry of Railways had set up a High Level Committee on Disaster Management, whose report has been accepted by the Government. Various recommendations of the committee are under implementation on Zonal Railways. The time taken for implementing various recommendations ranges from three months to three years.

Separate tracks for ordinary and superfast trains

†3287. SHRIMATI CHANDRAKALA PANDEY:
SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are contemplating to implement an effective scheme for laying separate tracks for ordinary and superfast trains;

(b) if so, by when; and

(c) if not, how long the Railways would continue to subject the rail passengers to untimely death?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There is a continuous improvement in safety performance of Indian Railways. The safety index of accident per million train kms. has reached 0.44 (provisional) in 2002-03, which is the lowest in the history of the Indian Railways.

Insurance scheme for passengers

3288. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce railway passengers insurance scheme by charging nominal premium so as to assure their life and baggage; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.